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A Chance for the Veteran —and for the South

By George S. Mitchell
Director of Veterans Services
Southern Regional Council

THE problem of building a richer civilization for the South is deeply involved with the problem of our returning veterans. If veterans, as they come home, can get their shoulders to the wheel of Southern progress we can be reasonably sure of our future; if not, the handicaps of the South will return more often and in worse forms. The opportunity we give our veterans has a direct bearing on the South's opportunity to build its future prosperity; fitting the veteran back into civilian life is a step toward fitting the South into the pattern of a higher American economy.

Congress did a good job of reflecting the will of the people when it outlined the rights and benefits of veterans of World War II. The help veterans are entitled to is generous. Whether they will get all that the laws make available depends on information and administration.

Benefits

The chief veteran benefits may be grouped as follows:

1. *Information*: The responsible Government agencies try to see to it that within reach of every veteran is a place where he can learn what help he can get in making readjustment to civilian life.

2. *Jobs*: Here the main responsibility rests, as it should, on the veteran himself. He has a statutory right to go back to his old job, or one like it, if he had a regular job before he went to war. If he had no permanent job before—as most veterans did not—he has to find one himself. He will get preferential help from the local U. S. Employment Service office, or he can ask his draft board to help him find a job. If he happened to have a Government job before he went into service, he can almost certainly get it back. If he plans to be self-employed, as businessman or farmer, he has a chance—though not a very good chance—to get favorable financing. He gets a clumsy preference in buying surplus commodities, which could be helpful if he plans to go in business for himself. If his business or farm yields less than $100 a month, the Government will make up the difference between $100 and what he actually takes in each month, for a year. If he can't find work he can get unemployment compensation.

3. *Pensions*: These are graduated to fit the degree of disability. The veteran who comes back well and whole is, of course, on his own. One of the major administrative tasks of state and federal governments for years to come will be the handling of claims for changes in pension status. Claims work is handled for the veteran free of charge.

4. *Education*: This is the master benefit. The Government makes it a principle that any veteran can get substantial help in making up for education lost because of the war. For the disabled, the Veterans Administration will work out a complete rehabilitation program, and will just about foot the bill. The veteran without disability can make his own choice of the kind of education he wants.

If he served more than 90 days, and was not dishonorably discharged, he can go to a school or a college, take a commercial or even a correspondence course with Government financial aid for a year; after that, the aid extends month for month for his time in service. The maximum payable to a school as tuition is $500 a year and an allowance of $65 a month for a single man, $90 a month for a man with dependents. These benefits will be paid wherever the veteran goes for study, provided the institution is approved by appropriate state authority.

Even if the veteran does not want a full-time course, the education allowance is available in whole or in part for training on the job. If he finds a job in a business or factory that has been approved as providing a rounded course of instruction in a particular skill or trade, he can draw learner's pay from his boss plus as much educational allowance as needed to bring his total pay near the wage of an already skilled worker. This job training benefit can be made available for farmers or farm hands, and details for such on-the-farm training are now being worked out state-by-state.

5. *Medical Care*: Veterans with service-acquired disabilities are entitled to hospitalization and treatment without charge. Other veterans may also receive free treatment at veterans hospitals whenever space is available.

Performance

This is what has been provided on the books. It is still a problem to fit each veteran and his benefits together. That is an administrative job. Beyond these benefits is the deeper, wider task of family and community adjustment to fit the needs and hopes of the men who have won the war. But this is intangible; for the moment, the tangible problem is the administrative one. If these services to veterans are administered efficiently and fairly, our men and our communities will gain much from them; if not, the blunted ambitions of millions of men will plague us all.

One of the first tasks of SRC's recently set up Veterans Services division has been to study and analyze the operations and the needs of services to veterans in the South. All of the facts are not yet in, and of course the various agencies have not been long at work and are still adjusting themselves to conditions—but a few main points are already clear.

For the time being these services are worked rather loosely. Congress provided the benefits, but it did not provide for uniformly effective administration. The money will be Federal money, but much responsibility for its administration lies with the states and the local communities. At least 15 separate Federal agencies work on some parts of the veterans program. Some of them have competing responsibilities, such as in the conflict between USES and Selective Service in the responsibility for finding jobs for veterans. The three main Federal agencies are the Veterans Administration, USES and Selective Service. They are presumed to be coordinated by the Retraining and Re-employment Administration — which is so far a paper agency. Within each state the heads of these three agencies make up a Veterans Service Committee, which has a Federal and often a state responsibility for tying together the work of all agencies in the program. Similar committees work in the local communities. For actual coordination, reliance is placed on whatever cooperation busy agency officials can muster.

State Responsibility

State governments have an important responsibility in veterans' education. The state names an agency, usually the Department of Education, to approve colleges, schools, and enterprises as places for training. The Veterans Administration accepts state approval and will pay education allowances to veterans who take up training in approved places. Most of the states have set up special commissions to help veterans. Generally these agencies are outgrowths and enlargements of similar services rendered to World War I veterans and are closely linked with established veterans' organizations like the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Disabled American Veterans. Some state agencies share with the veterans' organizations the work of pushing claims; others take the job entirely from the shoulders of the

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Brothers or Bombs?

By Harold L. Trigg
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Southern Regional Council

THE triumphant conclusion of World War II brought once again the opportunity to choose between another World War and enduring world peace. World-peace enforcement organization may help temporarily but not permanently. The world must do more than hold a gun over would-be aggressors. It must eliminate the cause of and desire for aggression. It must find quickly a basis for brotherhood that will bind all men—Jew and Gentile, black and white—together in cooperative effort toward common humanitarian goals. It must recognize and use the ties that bind all men together in universal peace.

Today it is a choice of Brothers or Bombs for tomorrow. Interracial brotherhood is essential to any program for building world peace. It is possible for America to begin the building of World Peace by starting at home with its Negro population. Plans and patterns tested in this experience will serve in good stead in solutions over wider areas.

Some Misconceptions

The Negro, himself, suffers his chief handicap in his confused thinking. His concentration upon what is denied him by others beclouds the vast horizon of opportunities to do for himself. He is fed constantly with what is *due* him, but seldom, if ever, with what he must *do* for himself. His failure to seriate his wants and ambitions, in order of greatest to least importance, finds him seeking first the goods and services that few can use, and ignoring those which are of first importance to all. The privilege to eat a $10 meal drives him into court, but the urgent need for adequate food, clothing and housing for thirteen million merely elicits excuses and incriminations. The mass Negro is merely a justification for vocalization.

We hold tenaciously to the traditional misconceptions that (1) The problem is racial; (2) The problem is Southern; (3) The problem is American; (4) The interaction between two groups is dangerous; and (5) Certain groups are inherently limited to certain spheres of activity.

It is not a race conflict, but the striving of all men who face want and fear to identify themselves with the existing focus of power in local, national or world society, so that they may have the sense of belonging to a social and economic order which insures food, clothing and shelter; safety from violence to person, freedom to develop God-given ability and the expression of this ability in activity which provides satisfying living.

World-Wide Problem

It is not Southern. It is the churning power in the breast of men—white, black and red—both North and South who are not sure of food and warmth for themselves and their families beyond today.

It is not American alone. It is world-wide. It will bring the teeming millions of China and India and Africa surging up to the bar of justice, as meted out by the "Big Five," in the next twenty years, seeking the things that free men from the shackles of fear and want, so that their spiritual selves may grow upward without obstruction instead of in lateral and personal conflict.

If thirteen million Negroes were suddenly eliminated from the American scene, the world would still face the problem of interaction between one-third white and two-thirds non-white population.

It is not the desire to receive a handout from a benevolent despot. It is the urge to work out individual destiny in social harmony. It is the vital impulse which, under proper direction, will produce world brotherhood instead of annihilating bombs.

Probably the most subtle of all the timeworn misconceptions that retard the growth of world brotherhood is that some men "do not want" the better things of life, and cannot use these things if given them; that there are men who would not

want independence and self-government even if they could achieve them. This is the universal rationalization for exploiting dependent people. This is the excuse for consigning millions of the world's citizens to insecurity. This is the misconception that provides followers for Hitlers.

In the interaction between races, or groups within races, of different social and economic levels this striving for identity with strength and security is not dangerous unless frustrated or misdirected. It is the essence of democracy. Without it, America and the world would atrophy.

An issue, here, is whether some men—white and black—shall be content in economic and spiritual barrenness and insecurity, or all men—white and black—shall strive to be included in the democratic principle of the inherent capacity of every individual to achieve worthy living?

Compulsory segregation of races is not the issue. Segregation is not a social control but an economic delusion. It is a substitute for reality. It is used to delude one group of men into thinking that they have economic security because they are attached to the dominant group. The attachment is the substitute for actual security. It is a hangover from the days of scarcity of economic goods and services, when the few in power were forced to perpetuate themselves by jockeying the less favorably situated group of the dominant race over against the weaker race.

World Understanding

These misconceptions must give way to the demands of a new day. If there is to be world peace through cooperation, there must be world understanding among the world's races.

Identification with the security of greater strength is the goal of all men. It is obscured by the traditional practice of centering attention on imagined conflict between races. The interaction between black and white is used to obscure the interaction between groups of the white race seeking the same thing. Segregation provides a soporific, a false sense of security to the white group lower down in the economic scale. This seeking identity with strength and power, seeking to belong to the group—local, national or global—which seems to have the coveted power and strength cannot be destroyed. It may become frustrated and produce a world of confusion. It should be directed to proper goals.

The challenge to a world emerging from a period of wanton destruction in a conflict brought on by the desire for security is to set up a criterion for identification with strength that all men can attain. This criterion will be the basis for enduring peace through world brotherhood. Race conflict is the result of failure to set the goal of true worth on the highest level—the level where there is enough power for all men.

Jesus gave us the one criterion for the security of power and strength that all men can seek without conflict. Men who gathered about the Master sought identification with him. The multitude said to him on one occasion, "Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee." He answered, "Who is my mother, or my brethren?" And looking at those about him he said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

Moral Premises

What is the will of God? When does a man do the will of God? If the principles which the Master preached and lived are accepted, the answer is simple. Respect the sacredness of personality of every individual. Not only believe in his ability to grow into worthy living, but help him by cooperation in setting up the environment in which he can grow. Be fair and just to all men in all things. Exercise wise stewardship over the wealth of the world so that it becomes a means to an end, not an end in itself—a means to free men from fear and want—not the prime goal which few can attain. Recognize the urge in every man to be active in the field of his special ability and in the service of humanity. "Love thy neighbor as thyself"—not *more* or *less* than, but *as*. In terms of different races living side by side in the same community, state and country, what does it mean for you and me? (1) Face the reality of the world-wide nature of

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Distinctions: True and False

By the Rev. J. Milton Richardson
Rector, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Atlanta
(Condensed from a sermon)

We live in a world where education, science, mechanics and the virtual banishment of the space and time elements in communication force the world into a neighborhood, but where economics, politics, prejudice, and just plain sin conspire to prevent its becoming a neighborhood. We know unless we contrive to create and maintain the peace we may be destroyed; yet into the pattern of the world selfishness, open and disguised, constantly creeps.

It may serve to clarify our thinking about our confused world if we recognize that there are true and false distinctions. The true distinction is never the vertical distinction, never the distinction between groups. The true distinction is always the horizontal distinction, the distinction between different levels of living.

The Woman of Samaria

This Jesus recognized in his dealing with the Woman of Samaria. Jesus' fellow Jews magnified the differences between the Jews and the Samaritans. Jesus saw the falsity of this vertical distinction. He knew that there were spiritually sincere and searching Samaritans and that there were worldly-minded and unspiritual Jews. He saw that the trouble with the woman was not that she was a Samaritan but that she had lived on a low level of life. He saw that her need was not to follow the Jewish ceremonial law but to find God—not to make a vertical change from one group to another, but to make a horizontal change to a higher level of living. We need to share Jesus' recognition that the true distinction is the horizontal distinction.

Take the class distinction. The underprivileged, submerged people, who have been forced to live on a standard of living below the level of decency, as they gain more education organize into groups to protect their interest. The privileged, monied people in turn organize to protect their interests. The two groups come to live not as friendly rivals, but as bitter enemies. Vertical distinctions are nourished as persons in each group selfishly try to get everything possible. But if persons in both groups consider the welfare of the whole, they will find that on that higher plane they can meet in human fellowship and in mutual co-operation. Differences can be resolved if persons on both sides rise to the higher plane of considering the interest and welfare of the whole.

Race Distinction

Take the race distinction. About a tenth of our total population in America is Negro. We have a large Jewish population. There are groups from different foreign countries that still preserve their own cultures and accordingly constitute minority racial groups.

Our own greatest problem is of course the Negro. We have to admit that he has often been unjustly treated from the time he was unwillingly transported to our shores. Today there are some Negro leaders who are wisely and sanely leading their people in real progress. Unfortunately, there are also Negro leaders who seek to inculcate in their race the feeling that the white man is their congenital enemy and who would have their people believe that all of their misfortunes are rooted in the injustice suffered from the white race.

Unfortunately there are white leaders unwilling to have any change in the status quo between the races. The hope of solution to this problem lies in persons in both races rising to a higher plane. Negro leaders must lead their people in recognizing that their enlarged opportunities and privileges carry greatly increased responsibility. White leaders must lead their people to recognize that the Negro's true progress must not be blocked and that we must be prepared for changes in the status quo. Upon the lower level of racial self-interest, there

can be only conflict; upon the higher level of cooperation, understanding, and recognition of responsibility, there is no racial problem that cannot be solved.

Ecclesiastical Distinction

Take the ecclesiastical distinction. There seems to be a mounting tension between Protestants and Catholics. Whenever either group tries to dominate or destroy or take unfair advantage of the other, there will be bad spirit between the groups to follow. When each has an appreciation and respect for the other, the two groups can live together harmoniously. Here again the important distinction should be horizontal rather than vertical. In the war against sin and materialism, we need all Christians, Protestant and Catholic. The important distinction is not the vertical distinction. There are both Protestants and Catholics who have not the vaguest idea of what the Christian spirit is. There are both Protestants and Catholics who are devout and sincere Christians and who indubitably have been used of God. There ought to be a greater affinity among those who love the Lord, whether they be Protestant or Catholic. The important distinction is not between groups but between levels of living.

Take the international distinction. Peace does not depend upon the extension of British and American sovereignty. It depends upon people of every land—America, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan—who join hands because they live on the level where peace can be created and maintained.

This does not mean that everything is as good as everything else and everybody is as good as everybody else. It doesn't mean that we are to drop distinctions. It means that we are to drop false distinctions that we may hold true distinctions. It means that the true distinction is never between groups but always between levels of living.

Citizen Argues for Negro's Right to Vote in Democratic Primary

To the News:

Both of my grandfathers were slaveholders. My father and uncles were Confederate soldiers. I was born and grew up among Negroes, have hired them and worked with them through a good part of my life, and I know of no good reason why a Negro who says he is a Democrat and will support the nominees of the party should not be permitted to vote in the Democratic primaries.

In Texas, the primary is the real election. If a man is not allowed to participate in that he is practically disfranchised. Many Negroes are as soundly Democratic as their white neighbors and ought not to be ruled out.

As a party we have nothing to fear from admitting them. Aristocracy is the rule of the favored class; democracy is the rule of the people as a whole. A considerable part of our citizenry in Texas is Negro. Then, according to fundamental democratic principles, there is no logical reason why Negroes, if Democrats, should be excluded from the primaries.

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that Negroess may not be excluded from the primaries because of their race. That decision is just. I hope our state executive committee will not establish a spiritual kinship to Gene Talmadge of Georgia and Senator Bilbo of Mississippi by trying to circumvent that ruling.

—*John A. Williams.*

(From the Dallas News)

WANTED:

THE SOUTH'S FUTURE FOR THE NATION

No matter how dismal the prospect may seem at times, the South really has a future.

Next month the first special quarterly issue of New South *will bring you a penetrating study of the South's over-all economic position in the nation and the possibilities for future development. Rupert B. Vance, of the University of North Carolina, has written, especially for the Southern Regional Council, this study based on his forthcoming book, "All These People." It will be illustrated with graphic drawings and charts.*

"Wanted: The South's Future for the Nation" is the title of the study.

Brothers or Bombs?

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this interaction of differing groups — this striving for the security of identity with focus of power. (2) Set up the goal for striving that is attainable for all men—the only security without conflict—identification with the good life as defined by the Master 1,915 years ago. (3) Recognize this striving as a normal process of democratic living—as the very essence of democracy itself and see the American Negro as a part of it not by tolerance but by the virtue of his belonging to the two billion people of the world (4) Have courage to feel a personal responsibility for doing something tangible to improve the quality of interaction between the white man and the Negro here and now.

What It Means

In specific application to thirteen million citizens of color it means: The Negro will be recognized as a potential contributor to the spiritual and material wealth of his community. His school, his playground, his library supported by public funds, will discover and nurture his best abilities and interests and provide for his growth into a citizenship—mature in respect for himself and his fellows, in good judgment in all matters which involve him and his community, mature in health and mind and body. He will get justice weighed in the same balance in reward or punishment.

He will get wages in ratio to service rendered sufficient to maintain self-respect, sufficient to maintain a home in a house on a street in a neighborhood that ensures beauty in living. An America that can spend three hundred billion dollars in order that some men may perish, can afford to spend as much, that all men may live in the fullness of life. America is rich enough to have rich men; too rich to have paupers.

The Right to Take Part

He will be permitted to serve his fellow men in the field of his special ability after this ability is developed and refined by education to the level of social and economic contribution.

As a recipient of neighborly love, he would get equitable consideration in all goods and services provided from public funds—schools, libraries, recreational facilities, medical and health services and utilities. He would likewise have equitable opportunity for employment in publicly supported activities. He would participate proportionately in the planning and execution of all activities in which he is involved.

World leadership has the final opportunity to administer world affairs so that two billion world citizens can live and grow into a world family in which life is sacred, liberty a reality, and the pursuit of happiness unrestricted by needless impedimenta; in which satisfying individual expression precludes the urge to social conflict.

A Chance for the Veteran

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veterans' groups. The state agencies are rapidly building up personnel to give wide local coverage; their local offices are useful places where veterans can find out about state and federal laws affecting them.

The main job of local communities is the intangible one already mentioned. Churches, clubs, voluntary organizations, town and county governments have an obvious duty to do all they can to fit the veterans back in. Local information centers are regarded by the Federal and state governments as a community responsibility; it is up to the City Councils, Community Chests, Red Cross chapters, Chambers of Commerce, veterans' organizations or other local groups to get information centers going. Some thirty-five Southern cities now have such centers.

What Is Needed

The particular problem of Southern communities in all of these services to veterans is that of evenhanded assistance without distinction. On the community side, we must rely principally on the patriotism, good-will and fairness of the citizens. On the administrative side, certain things clearly needed are being done here and there, and could be done much more generally.

First is the use of trained Negro interviewers and counselors in offices that serve large numbers of Negro veterans. This is a matter of efficiency. Most white interviewers and counselors cannot make Negro veterans feel at ease or get from

them the real story of what they hope for, what they need, and the obstacles they meet in getting these things. Generally, what we have now is a segregated Negro waiting room, attended by white clerks behind the counter. When a particular veteran's turn is reached, a girl (white) calls out, "Willie Jackson!" Ex-Private Jackson is then admitted to the area behind the counter where he sits by a white man's desk and does his best to get his story across. The interviewer is probably in most cases an unusually sympathetic Southern white person, but the barriers that stand in the way of a meshing of the minds of the interviewer and Mr. Jackson are many. Some agencies do make available Negro counsellors if their services are required. Where Negroes are used in these jobs, the contacts are better made, and the Negro community as a whole is better informed of the problems and achievements of the agency. Some of the points at which Negroes could obviously be used with considerable gains in effiicency are the Veterans Administration contact offices, USES offices, the Home Service Department of local Red Cross chapters, re-employment committeemen for Selective Service Boards, state veterans' agencies, veterans' information centers, and state, city, and charitable family service agencies.

Better Records

A second matter, less important, is that few veterans' servicing agencies keep figures on their work showing a breakdown by race. Most officials say that their services are impartial, that clerks are instructed to make no distinction of race, and that therefore the figures do not reflect servicing by race. The basic records are usually available, and separate summaries could be made. Probably this will be done later.

In education, much wider advantage could be taken of the benefits. Existing Negro colleges and schools have adapted their teaching work to the needs of, and are getting substantial enrollment from, the veterans. The colleges in particular are using their limited resources to advantage. A high proportion of Negro veterans had only a few years of grammar school and cannot be tempted back into full-time education at all. Of those who will go into full-time study, many will want vocational education. The South has lagged in providing equal facilities for vocational training for both races. Most white veterans probably can get something like the vocational education they want near their homes. Most Negro veterans have to go away from home to get even inadequate training. White vocational high schools offer a full range of subjects, in fairly well-equipped shops. Negro vocational high schools run to carpentry and shoe repairing and dressmaking. It is a rare one that offers work in internal combustion engines or any of the new war-taught skills.

Local Responsibility

Approved on-the-job training is just getting under way in most Southern states, and veterans getting it are numbered only in the hundreds. It would be well if in the next few months they could be numbered in scores of thousands in each state. This is a community, as well as an administrative, effort; for it needs the support of informed public opinion and cooperation from business and labor.

If we can contrive to administer the veterans' programs with fairness, we shall have salvaged out of the war great new human resources, on which the South can build the freedoms for which men went out to fight.

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